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For Immediate Release

STATEMENT OF FCC CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI ANNOUNCING PROCESS REFORM MEASURE ON “EDITORIAL PRIVILEGES”

WASHINGTON, February 9, 2017 – Each month, the Federal Communications Commission holds a monthly meeting at which Commissioners vote on proposals and orders drafted by the agency’s various Bureaus and Offices. Routinely after each vote in which an item is adopted, the Commission votes to grant the staff of the relevant Bureaus and Offices “editorial privileges”—that is, the power to make changes to the documents that the Commissioners have just voted upon.

Two years ago, Commissioner O’Rielly began raising concerns about the process of granting editorial privileges. Specifically, he has suggested that such privileges currently are too broad, insofar as they extend to substantive edits. Filling in a citation in a document is one thing; changing the meaning of that document is another.

I believe that Commissioner O’Rielly’s view has merit. Accordingly, we are going to make changes to the process.

Specifically, beginning at this month’s FCC meeting on February 23, editorial privileges granted to Bureaus and Offices will extend only to technical and conforming edits to items. Any substantive changes made to items following a meeting must be proposed by a Commissioner. Moreover, substantive changes to items should only be made in cases in which they are required, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act, as a response to new arguments made in a Commissioner’s dissenting statement.

I thank Commissioner O’Rielly for his hard work on the issue of process reform and look forward to implementing more of his suggestions going forward.

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